



THE EPISCOPAL  
DIOCESE OF OHIO

## **SERVICE OF EVENING PRAYER**

**ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
CLEVELAND, OHIO**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2021  
AT 4 O'CLOCK P.M.**

**OFFICIANT:  
THE REV. DEBRA Q. BENNETT**

**PREACHER:  
THE REV. CHRISTOPHER M. DECATUR**



Absalom Jones was born into slavery in Sussex, Delaware in 1746. He taught himself to read in his early teens from books he purchased by saving pennies given to him by visitors to his master's home. At the age of sixteen, Jones' family was separated when his immediate family members were sold and he was taken to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by his new owner. Jones worked as a clerk in his owner's store by day and was allowed to work for himself and attend an all-black school at night.

In 1770, Jones married a fellow slave, and through hard work and the help of friends and his father-in-law, he was able to buy his wife's freedom. Jones saved

enough to purchase his own freedom in 1784. He was an active member of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia and served as lay preacher for the Black members of the congregation. In 1786, Richard Allen joined Jones at the church and their futures would forever be intertwined. The Black membership at St. George's increased tenfold as a result of the evangelistic efforts of Jones and Allen. But this increase was not welcomed by the white members of the congregation. Instead of praising their efforts, church officials responded by attempting to segregate the Black congregants. During a Sunday service in November 1786, ushers attempted to remove all Black persons, including Jones, from the main floor of the church to the balcony. Jones, Allen, and the Black members of the congregation promptly left the church as a group.

Jones and Allen subsequently founded the *Free African Society* on April 12, 1787. Members of this organization met regularly and paid dues which were used to benefit those in need. This organization was crucial in caring for the sick and dying of Philadelphia when a yellow fever epidemic swept the city in 1793. Out of this society grew The African Church, organized on July 7, 1791. Both Jones and Allen wanted to remain affiliated with the Methodist church, but their followers overwhelmingly voted to affiliate themselves with the Episcopal Church as a result of their persecution by the Methodists at St. George's. Allen disagreed with this decision and withdrew from the African Church, taking a small number of followers with him.

Jones remained as the leader of The African Church which was formally received into the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania on October 17, 1794 and renamed St. Thomas African Episcopal Church. St. Thomas was the first Black Episcopal parish in the United States. Bishop William White (Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania) ordained Jones a deacon in the Episcopal Church in 1795 and as priest in 1804. Jones became the first ordained priest of African descent in the United States.

Despite the split in The African Church, Jones and Allen continued to work together. They were among the founders of the African Masonic Lodge in Philadelphia in 1798. The two men also led the Black community in petitioning the Pennsylvania State Legislature for the abolition of slavery in 1799. In 1800, they sent a similar petition to the United States Congress. Jones and Allen also founded the Society for the Suppression of Vice and Immorality in 1809. In 1816, Jones saw his friend Allen consecrated the first bishop of the newly formed African Methodist Episcopal Church. And in 1817, the two men were united again when they condemned the newly formed American Colonization Society, which encouraged freed slaves to return to Africa. One year later, Absalom Jones died at his home in Philadelphia on February 13, 1818.

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A service honoring the memory established by the Rev. Absalom Jones has been held as a joint offering of the Wilma Ruth Combs Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians and the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio for nearly two decades. We use as the text for our service the 1789 Prayer Book, the edition that provided the resource for the ministry of Absalom Jones.

On behalf of the members of the Chapter and Bishop Hollingsworth, we thank you for joining us this evening.

### **Wilma Ruth Combs Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians**

Executive Committee:

Dianne Audrick Smith, President, St. Andrew's, Cleveland

Poleda Moodie, Vice President, St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights

Lynnette Miller, Secretary, St. Philip's, Akron

Lois Jackson, Treasurer, St. Andrew's, Cleveland

The Rt. Rev. Arthur B. Williams, Jr., Chaplain, The Diocese of Ohio

### **Union of Black Episcopalians National Board**

Wendy Wilson Walker, Mid West Regional Director, Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland

## The Order for Daily Evening Prayer

(According to the Book of Common Prayer 1789, adapted)

**Prelude Air from Suite for Organ**

Florence Price (1887-1953)

**Welcome**

Dianne Audrick Smith

**Opening Hymn: Blessed Absalom vs 1, 4, 6 , 7**

Words by Harold T. Lewis (1947-)

Music: *Lauda Anima*, John Goss (1800-1880)

Born in bondage, born in shackles, Born stripped of all dignity,  
Abs'lom Jones was bound, determined, That he would one day be free.  
Blessed Abs'lom, leads us, guides us. In the bonds of unity.

One fine morning, while at worship, Wrested from his knees in prayer'  
He, his friends, were thus evicted: "You no more may praise God here."  
Blessed Abs'lom, pray that we may Stand steadfast and persevere.

Blessed Abs'lom Jones, first priest of Afrič's stock within our fold'  
May we, inspired by your witness Raise up priests with hearts of gold!  
Blessed Abs'lom, pioneer, prophet May your story long be told!

Praise to Christ the Liberator; Praise Creator ever blest;  
Praise the Spirit, Source of comfort North to south, and east to west:  
Blessed Abs'lom, priest, exemplar, In God's bosom now at rest.

*The Minister shall begin the Evening Prayer, by reading the following sentences of Scripture.*

The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him. *Habakkuk 2:20*

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord,  
my strength and my Redeemer. *Psalm 19:14*

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins,  
God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 8,9*

*Then the Minister shall say,*

Dearly beloved Brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places, to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them before the face of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. And

although we ought, at all times, humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we chiefly for to do, when we assemble and meet together, to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me, with a pure heart and humble voice, unto throne of the heavenly grace saying -

*A general Confession, to be said by the whole congregation after the Minister, all kneeling.*

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep: We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts: We have offended against thy holy laws: We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done: And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us most miserable offenders: Spare thou those, O God, who confess their faults: Restore thou those who are penitent: According to thy promises declared unto mankind, in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. *Amen.*

*Declaration of Absolution or Remission of sins; to be made by the Bishop alone.*

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live, hath given power and commandment to his Ministers to declare and pronounce to his People, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins. He pardoneth and absolveth all those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance, and his Holy Spirit; that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy; so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*The People shall answer here, and at the end of every Prayer: Amen.*

*Then the Minister shall say the Lord's Prayer; the People still kneeling, and repeating it, both here, and wheresoever else it is used in Divine Service.*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven: Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us: And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: for thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*Then likewise she shall say,*

O Lord, open thou our lips,

*Answer.* And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

*Here, all standing up, the Minister shall say,*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

*Answer.* As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

*Minister:* Praise ye the Lord.

*Answer.* The Lord's Name be praised

## The Psalter

### Psalm 137:1-6

1. By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, \*  
When we remembered you, O Zion.
2. As for our harps, we hung them up\*  
On the trees in the midst of that land.
3. For those who led us away captive asked for a song,  
and our oppressors called for mirth: \*  
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”
4. How shall we sing the Lord's song \*  
Upon an alien soil?
5. If I forget you, O Jerusalem, \*  
Let my right hand forget its skill.
6. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth  
if I do not remember you, \*  
If I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.

## The Lessons

### First Lesson: *Isaiah 11:1-5*

The Song of Mary *Magnificat*

Roland Carter (b. 1942)

My soul doth magnify the Lord, \*  
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.  
For he hath regarded\*  
the lowliness of his handmaiden.  
For behold from henceforth \*  
all generations shall call me blessed.  
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, \*  
and holy is his Name.  
And his mercy is on them that fear him \*  
throughout all generations.  
He hath showed strength with his arm; \*  
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
He hath put down the mighty from their seat, \*  
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things, \*  
and the rich he hath sent empty away.  
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, \*  
as he promised to our forefathers,  
Abraham and his seed forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Second Lesson: ***John 15:12-15***

The Song of Simeon    ***Nunc dimittis***

Eugene Hancock (1929-1993)

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, \*  
according to thy word;  
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, \*  
which thou has prepared before the face of all people,  
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, \*  
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

*Then shall be said the Apostles' Creed by the Minister and the People, standing.*

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;  
And in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord;  
    who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
    born of the Virgin Mary,  
    suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
    was crucified dead, and buried.  
    He descended into hell.  
    The third day he rose again from the dead.  
    He ascended into heaven,  
    and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
    From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## The Prayers

*After that, these Prayers following, all devoutly kneeling; the Minister first pronouncing,*

The Lord be with you;

*Answer:* And with thy spirit.

*Minister:* Let us pray.

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;

*Answer:* And grant us thy salvation.

*Minister:* Oh God, make clean our hearts within us;

*Answer:* And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

*Then shall be said the Collect for Blessed Absalom Jones, and, after that, the Collects and Prayers following.*

*Minister:* Set us free, O heavenly Father, from every bond of prejudice and fear; that, honoring the steadfast courage of thy servant Absalom Jones, we may show forth in our lives the reconciling love and true freedom of the children of God, which thou hast given us in thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Answer:* Amen.

### **A Collect for Peace**

*Minister:* O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee, we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

*Answer:* Amen.

### **A Collect for Aid against Perils**

*Minister:* O Lord, our Heavenly Father, by whose almighty power we have been preserved this day; by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

*Answer:* Amen.

### **A Prayer for the President of the United States, and all in Civil Authority**

*Minister:* O Lord, Our Heavenly Father, the high and mighty Ruler of the universe, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; most heartily we beseech thee, with thy favour to behold and bless thy servant The President of the United States, and all others in authority; and so replenish them with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that they may always incline to thy will, and walk in thy way: Endue them plenteously with heavenly gifts; grant them in health and prosperity long to live; and finally, after this life, to attain everlasting joy and felicity, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Answer:* Amen.

## A Prayer for the Clergy and People

*Minister:* Almighty and everlasting God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, send down upon our Bishops and other Clergy, and upon the Congregations committed to their charge, the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and, that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of the blessing: Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ.

*Answer:* Amen.

## A Prayer for all Conditions of Men

*Minister:* O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men, that thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for thy holy Church Universal; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to thy Fatherly goodness, all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate; that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities; giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions: And this we beg for Jesus Christ's sake.

*Answer:* Amen.

## Hymn: We're Marching to Zion”

Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Music: Robert S. Lowery (1826-1899)

Come, we that love the Lord, And let our joys be known;  
Join in a song with sweet accord, Join in a song with sweet accord,  
And thus surround the throne, And thus surround the throne.

### Refrain

*We're marching to Zion, Beautiful, beautiful Zion,  
We're marching upward to Zion, The beautiful city of God*

Let those refuse to sing Who never knew our God;  
But children of the heav'nly King, But children of the heav'nly King,  
May speak their joys abroad, May speak their joys abroad.

### Refrain

The hill of Zion yields A thousand sacred sweets  
Before we reach the heav'nly fields, Before we reach the heav'nly fields,  
Or walk the golden streets, Or walk the golden streets.

### Refrain

Then let our songs abound, And ev'ry tear be dry;  
We're marching through Immanuel's ground, We're marching through Immanuel's ground,  
To fairer worlds on high, To fairer worlds on high.

### Refrain

*Then the Minister shall say*  
**A General Thanksgiving**

*Minister:* Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us, and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but, above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our heats may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end.

*Answer:* Amen.

**A Prayer of St. Chrysostom**

*Minister:* Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time, with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name, thou wilt grant their requests; fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us, in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting.

*Answer:* Amen.

**2 Corinthians 13:14**

*Minister:* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore.

*Answer:* Amen.

**Hymn: Lift Every Voice and Sing**

Lyrics: James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)  
Music: John Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954)

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise,  
High as the list'ning skies, let it resound loud as the rolling sea  
Sing a song full of faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chast'ning rod,  
Felt in the day that hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet,  
Come to the place on which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who has by thy might,  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee,  
Least our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee,  
Shadowed beneath thy hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.

*Here endeth the Order of Evening Prayer.*

**POSTLUDE**

**Voluntary in G Major**

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)

## **Thank you to all who participated in this Absalom Jones Service of Evening Prayer**

Officiant: The Rev. Debra Q. Bennett, Rector, Church of Our Saviour, Akron  
Preacher: The Rev. Christopher M. Decatur, Priest in Charge, St. Luke's Cleveland  
Absolution: The Rt. Rev. Arthur B. Williams, Jr., Assisting Bishop, The Diocese of Ohio

Readers: Nate Bennett, St. Andrew's, Cleveland  
Zack Bennett, St. Andrew's, Cleveland  
Shelby McBee, St. Andrew's Cleveland  
Lonny Gatlin, St. Barnabas, Bay Village  
Wendy Wilson Walker, Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland  
Robin Woodbury, Christ Church, Hudson

Musicians: Nicole Keller, Assistant Organist, Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland  
Matthew Jones, Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland  
Thomas Buckley McDaniel, Organist and Dir of Music, The Church of St. Edward the  
Martyr, New York, NY  
Kelcie Dugger, Youth Outreach Coordinator, St. Luke's, Cleveland  
Bob Navis Jr., Music Director, St. Luke's, Cleveland

Appreciation is expressed to those who helped develop this service:

Technology: Allison Thompson, Consultant, St. Luke's, Cleveland  
Lynette Williams, Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland  
Jessica Rocha, Communications Director, The Diocese of Ohio  
Slide Presentation: Darcel Arrington, St. Andrew's, Cleveland

Wilma Combs Chapter of UBE Planning Committee:

The Rt. Rev. Arthur B. Williams, Jr., The Diocese of Ohio  
The Rev. Christopher M. Decatur, St. Luke's, Cleveland  
Darcel Arrington, St. Andrew's, Cleveland  
Robin Woodbury, Christ Church, Hudson  
Dianne Audrick Smith, St. Andrew's, Cleveland

.....and The Diocese of Ohio

Donations will provide support to the Absalom Jones Fund of the Presiding Bishop's Office supporting the two Historically Black Episcopal Colleges and Universities, St. Augustine's University (Raleigh, NC) and Voorhees College (Denmark, SC). We request that your donations may be sent to the following link: <https://dohio.org/designate-a-gift-to-your-parish>

Or checks should be made payable to NOCUBE and mailed to the below:

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